

Etihad to double daily flights to key US destination

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 16 March, 2026



Dhaka: Etihad Airways will launch a second daily flight between Abu Dhabi and Chicago O'Hare International Airport this summer, starting June 15. The new service will make Chicago the operators' largest US gateway, surpassing New York JFK.

According to media reports, the outbound flight, EY11, will depart Abu Dhabi mid-morning for a mid-afternoon arrival in Chicago after a 15-hour and 40-minute-long nonstop journey. The 14-hour return flight, EY12, will depart Chicago in the late evening and arrive in Abu Dhabi in the mid-evening.

Passengers departing Abu Dhabi will be facilitated with US preclearance procedures, allowing them to arrive in Chicago as domestic travelers and enjoy a faster airport exit or onward connection.

Etihad will operate the new Chicago service with its Airbus A350-1000

fleet. The airline's A350-1000s feature a two-class cabin configuration, comprising 44 business and 327 economy class seats.

With the double daily service, Chicago O'Hare will overtake New York JFK as the Abu Dhabi-based carrier's biggest US gateway. The airline currently operates up to 11 weekly nonstop flights to JFK, while the new Chicago schedule will represent its largest US operation.

Currently, Etihad serves six US gateways, including Atlanta, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, New York JFK, and Washington Dulles. The airline's partnership with American Airlines, a Oneworld Alliance member that operates a major hub at O'Hare, is widely seen as a key factor behind the decision to expand in Chicago.

While Etihad is the smallest of the three major Middle Eastern carriers — behind Emirates and Qatar Airways — the double daily Chicago service will make it the only airline among the trio to operate twice-daily flights to the city.

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